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## CHAPTER 4

### ETHNICITY AND RACE

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#### CHAPTER OUTLINE

##### I. Ethnic Groups and Ethnicity

###### A. Ethnicity and Race

1. An ethnic group may define themselves as different because of their language, religion, geography, history, ancestry, or physical traits.
2. When an ethnic group is assumed to have a biological basis, it is called a race.
3. Most Americans fail to distinguish between ethnicity and race.
  - a. Many people think that ethnicity is just the politically correct term for race.
  - b. Ethnicity is based on cultural traditions, while races are based mainly on biological traits.

###### B. Ethnic Markers, Identities, and Statuses

1. Ethnic groups are formed around virtually the same features as cultures: common beliefs, values, customs, history, and the like.
2. Ethnicity entails identification with a given ethnic group, but it also involves the maintenance of a distinction from other groups.
3. Status refers to any position in a society that can be filled by an individual.
  - a. Ascribed status is status into which people enter automatically without choice, usually at birth or through some other universal event in the life cycle.
  - b. Achieved status is status that people acquire through their own actions.
4. Within complex societies, ascribed status can describe large subgroups: minority groups, majority groups, and races are all examples of *ascribed* statuses.
5. Differences in ascribed status are commonly associated with differences in social-political power.
6. The definitive feature of a minority group is that its members systematically experience lesser income, authority, and power than other members of their society; a minority group is not necessarily a smaller population than other groups.

##### II. Ethnic Groups, Nations, and Nationalities

###### A. Nation-States Defined

1. Nation and nation-state now refer to an autonomous, centrally organized political entity.
2. Ethnic groups are not necessarily so formally politically organized.
3. The majority of all nation-states have more than one ethnic group in their constituent populations, and the multiethnicity of all countries is increasing.

###### B. Nationalities and Imagined Communities

1. Nationalities are ethnic groups that aspire to autonomous statehood (regardless of their political history).
2. The term "imagined communities," coined by Benedict Anderson, has been used to describe nationalities, since most of their member population feel a bond with each other in the absence of any "real" acquaintance.

3. Mass media and the language arts have help to form such imagined communities by becoming the means of establishing a commonality of values, motivations, language, and the like.
4. Colonialism refers to the political, social, economic, and cultural domination of a territory and its people by a foreign power for an extended period of time.
5. Colonialism helped create imagined communities as different ethnic groups under the control of the same colonial administration often pooled resources in opposition to the colonial power.

### III. Peaceful Coexistence

#### A. Assimilation

1. Assimilation describes the process of change when a minority ethnic group adopts the patterns and norms of its host culture.
2. Assimilation is not uniform: it may be forced or relatively benign depending on historical particularities.
3. Brazil (as opposed to the United States and Canada) is cited as a highly assimilative society wherein ethnic neighborhoods are virtually unknown.

#### B. The Plural Society

1. Plural society refers to a multiethnic nation-state wherein the subgroups do not assimilate but remain essentially distinct, in (relatively) stable coexistence.
2. Barth defines plural society as a society combining ethnic contrasts and the economic interdependence of the ethnic groups.
3. Such interdependence tends to be structured by ecological specialization (use of different environment resources).
4. Barth argued that cultural differences were part of the "natural" environment of ethnic groups, and thus peaceful, egalitarian coexistence was a possibility, particularly when there was no competition for resources.

#### C. Multiculturalism

1. Multiculturalism is "the view of cultural diversity in a country as something good and desirable."
2. This is opposed to assimilationism, which expects subordinate groups to take on the culture of the dominant group while abandoning their own.
3. Basic aspects of multiculturalism at the government level are the official espousal of some degree of cultural relativism along with the promotion of distinct ethnic practices.

### IV. Roots of Ethnic Conflict

#### A. Prejudice and Discrimination

1. Prejudice is the devaluation of a given group based upon the assumed characteristics of that group.
2. Discrimination is disproportionately harmful treatment of a group: it may be *de jure* or *de facto*.
3. Attitudinal discrimination is discrimination against a group based only upon its existence as a group.
4. Genocide, "the deliberate elimination of a group through mass murder," is the most extreme form of discrimination.
5. Institutional discrimination is the formalized pursuance of discriminatory practices by a government or similar institution.